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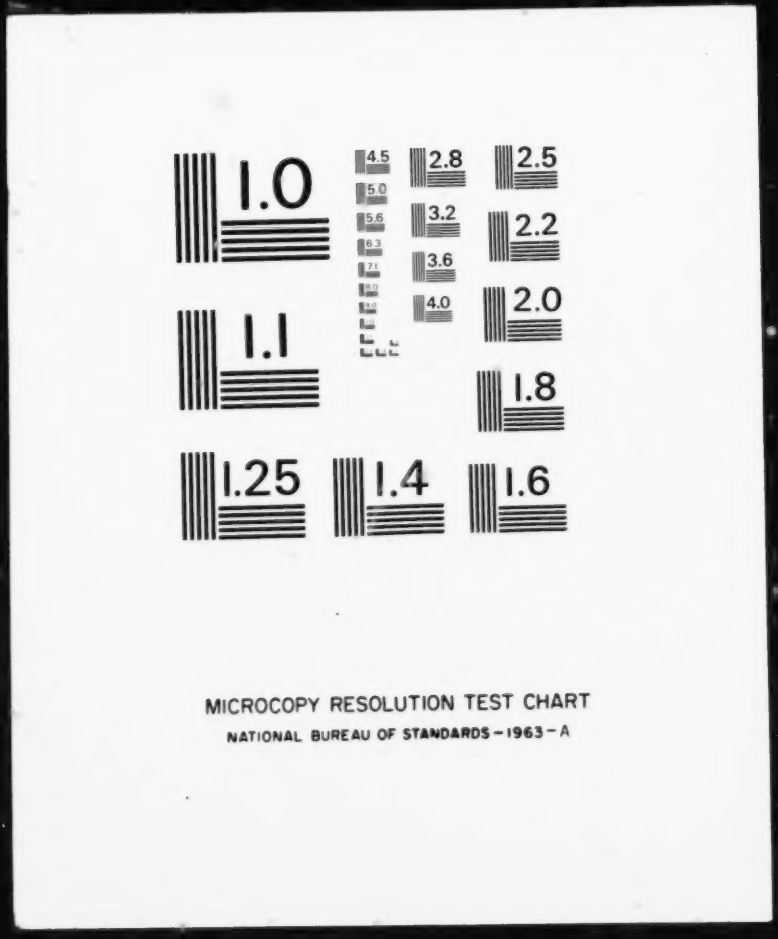

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Descriptors-*Accreditation (Institutions), *Dental Associations, *Dental Hygienists, *Health Occupations Education, Policy, Professional Education, *Standards
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The Council on Dental Education cooperates with the American Dental Hygienists' Association in developing educational requirements for schools of dental hygiene. To be eligible for accreditation, schools must operate on a non-profit basis. A school applying for accreditation completes a previsitation questionnaire concerning its program. The visiting team includes two members of the Council of consultants to the Council; one Council staff member; and observers who may include a representative from the state examining board, a representative of the American Dental Hygienists' Association, and a generalist representing the regional accrediting association upon invitation of the school. The visit averages one and one-half days during which time the team meets with the program director, faculty members, and students; audits classes; visits clinical facilities; and studies files, course outlines, class schedules, teaching plans, and student laboratory experience. Reports and recommendations of the team are acted upon by the Council which grants accreditation, provisional accreditation, or no accreditation. (JK)

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One of a series of reports issued by the National Commission on Accrediting

March, 1964

Accreditation in DENTAL HYGIENE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION
Council on Dental Education
222 East Superior Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611

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ACCREDITING AGENCY

Three dental auxiliaries are recognized by the American Dental Association and accredited by the Association's Council on Dental Education: dental assisting, dental hygiene, and dental laboratory technology.

Dental assistants may work as office managers and may assist in chairside dental service, but they are not authorized to undertake service within the mouth. Their professional education may consist of a one- to two-year program following secondary school.

Dental laboratory technicians create dental appliances under dental prescription or authorization. Their educational training consists of one academic year of formal education followed by a second year of bench experience either in a school dental laboratory or a commercial laboratory.

Dental hygienists are the only dental auxiliaries licensed by the states to render service within the mouth. They are capable of scaling and polishing teeth, exposing and processing x-ray film, applying sodium fluoride to the teeth, and instructing patients in the care of teeth. Their educational program, which must cover two academic years following secondary school, is designed as a college-level program.

Although programs for dental assistants and dental laboratory technicians may lead to the associate of arts or associate of science degree, only programs in dental hygiene lead to the associate and baccalaureate degrees. For this reason, the National Commission on Accrediting considers accreditation of dental hygiene programs to be within its purview. After reviewing the accrediting policies and procedures in this field, the Commission granted recognition for dental hygiene to the American Dental Association in April, 1964.

The Council on Dental Education of the American Dental Association conducts accreditation in both dental and dental auxiliary education. (For a description of the composition of the Council and its procedures in accrediting dental schools, see the report issued by the National Commission on Accrediting in March, 1964, "Accreditation in Dentistry.")

In 1947 the Council was authorized by the ADA to accredit schools of dental hygiene. As of September, 1964, it had approved 48 dental hygiene programs in the United States and the three in Canada. As of that date it had not determined the accreditation status of an additional seven new programs in the United States.

PURPOSES OF ACCREDITING

The Council on Dental Education accredits dental hygiene schools for the same reasons that it accredits dental schools: "Licensing bodies, such as the state boards of dental examiners, as well as the public look to an accrediting agency for an evaluation of the schools whose graduates have received the proper education and training for a specific profession."[1] All 50 states have enacted licensure laws for dental hygienists. All but Alabama and Georgia require that candidates for the licensure examination be graduates of a school of dental hygiene, and all but these two states limit eligibility for the licensure examination to graduates of ADA-approved schools.

DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES

The Council on Dental Education cooperates with the American Dental Hygienists' Association in developing educational requirements for schools of dental hygiene. The original requirements were approved by the House of Delegates of the ADA in 1947. In 1951, following four years of pilot evaluations, the Council held a workshop with the directors of all dental hygiene schools to agree on the aims and objectives of their programs, the basic skills and desired abilities of dental hygienists, and the minimum length of the 19 subjects in the dental hygiene curriculum. The addition of roentgenology to the list of these 19 required subjects has been the major change in these educational requirements since 1947.

ELIGIBILITY

The Council on Dental Education offers assistance to institutions in planning new programs, but accredits only existing schools. In its statement, "Requirements for the Accrediting of a School for Dental Hygienists," it specifies that approved programs must be operated on a non-profit basis, and identifies standards for the school's physical plant, enrollment, library, admission requirements, instructions, faculty qualifications, and curriculum. Regional accreditation of the parent institution is an essential requirement for eligibility.

APPLICATION FOR EVALUATION

Each school applying for accreditation must complete a pre-visitation questionnaire concerning its educational program, and the visiting team receives this material prior to its visitation.

VISITING TEAM

The team consists of three members and several non-voting observers. The team members include two members of the Council on Dental Education or consultants to the Council and one Council staff member, while the observers may include a representative from the state dental examining board and one from the American Dental Hygienists' Association. A generalist representing the regional accrediting association serves as an observer upon invitation of the school.

THE VISIT

Procedures followed by the visiting team are similar to those in dentistry, although the visit averages one and one-half days rather than four days for dental schools. The visiting team meets with the program director, faculty members, and students, and may audit classes, visit clinical facilities, and study files of course outlines, class schedules, teaching plans, and student laboratory experiences.

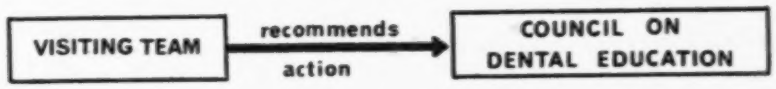
The purpose of the visit is not merely to inspect, but to assist in strengthening the educational program through counseling. At the conclusion of the visit, the members of the team meet with the chief administrative officer of the institution and report their observations.

THE TEAM REPORT

A report of the visit is drafted by the staff member of the Council. After the other members of the team have approved the draft, a copy is sent to the administrator of the institution for any corrections prior to transmittal to the Council.

ACTION ON THE REPORT

Reports and recommendations of the visiting team are acted upon by the Council, which may grant accreditation, provisional accreditation, or no accreditation. Provisional accreditation indicates that deficiencies are to be corrected within a specified period if the institution is to retain its accredited status.



APPEAL

The Council permits an institution to appeal its decision, but the Council itself remains responsible for final approval. If the decision is appealed, the Council withholds public announcement of its accrediting action until discussion and review at its next regular meeting.

REACCREDITATION

The Council revisits auxiliary programs on a seven-to-ten-year cycle, comparable to that in dental education. It schedules visits more frequently to institutions presenting a special need.

COSTS

All accreditation expenses are paid by the Council on Dental Education, except for the expenses of observers, which are paid by their organizations, and those of a generalist representing the regional association, which are paid by the institution.

RELATIONS WITH REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The Council recommends that institutions request the regional association to appoint a generalist to accompany the visiting team.

[1] Shailer Peterson, "The Counseling and Accrediting Program for Dental Hygiene Schools," Journal of American Dental Hygienists' Association, October, 1951, p. 103.

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